

# IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

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I have found that over the years it is always the little things that make the difference. This was again the case when I started at Forest Hills. Many of the little things had been overlooked.

The first thing we did was to take all the ballwashers apart, including the posts and bases, and sandblasted them. Then we took all the metal patio furniture and the legs from our benches and sandblasted them. Because my mechanic, Bob Messerli, was excellent with a spray gun, we had everything painted in short time. Now we had new looking accessories with very little cost. No more chipped and peeling items out on the golf course.

The next items to change were the flags and flagpoles. Because of theft and vandalism there were all different types of flags and flagpoles. Our golf pro, Mike Retica, had a good looking bag tag with a club logo. I had a silk screen made and had all our flags silk screened with this new logo. I changed to tube type flags and cream colored poles so there's no painting poles. This enables us to have a couple of poles made up, enabling the crew to just put out a new flag and pole in a matter of minutes. No more looking through a box to find the right number flag and then finding a pole, a swivel and tying the new flag on. We also keep 18 painted cups on hand and every month they are switched so we always have nice looking cups.

This combination gives your course a touch of class. If you make your crew wear shirts you might want to silk screen these so they take more pride in their appearance. We also put the "Repair Ball Mark" type pin locators on the flagpoles; thus eliminating signs around the greens.

The next problem was a lack of signs. When I saw the nice entrance sign Castlewood Golf Course had put up, I immediately called the superintendent, Jake Jacobson, and asked who put up the sign. After a phone call and one meeting, we had a new entrance sign. This led to an idea for tee signs. Because we didn't have \$1,000.00 for new tee signs, I went back to an old idea I had used often. I had one tee sign made up and put a "donated by" sign on it and had it at our annual board meeting in November. Beside it I had a sign up sheet with 18 spaces. That night all 18 signs had donors plus they get advertising out of the deal. We have since bought a router and have made directional and next tee signs ourselves.

One other thing that may make your job a little easier. How many times have you sent your crew out with your irrigation map only to have it come back torn, full of mud or a soggy mess that nobody can read? I solved this problem years ago by taking my best "as is" plan and have it printed on mylar plastic at a blueprint shop. It usually costs less than \$25.00 and it won't tear and can be washed off.

I guess I have always felt that it's the little things that make one country club look better than another. It's not always the budget that makes a difference but what you do with your budget. None of the items I mentioned are expensive to do but they can pay large dividends down the road. Because I feel that when the little things are done, the golfers tend to enjoy the course more; thus making your job easier.

I hope some of these ideas will help other superintendents in the future.